



## FOX 32 gets a glimpse into Stateville prison's cutting edge program



**Feb 11, 2014 By Larry Yellen, FOX 32 News Legal Analyst –**

**CHICAGO (FOX 32 News) - FOX 32 got a rare look inside Illinois' maximum security Stateville Prison in Joliet.**

FOX 32's Larry Yellen spent the day with 15 inmates who hope the skills they're learning there will almost guarantee them a job when they're released.

It could be called a cutting-edge program, and what's being cut, is hair.

The inmates at Stateville spend much of their time in their cells, leaving only for daily exercise, three meals, work assignments, and other occasional purposes.

For 15 inmates though, some of them convicted murderers, every morning at 6 a.m. they have class, at barber school.

Tuesday's lecture was on barbershop management.

After two hours, there's lunch then into the barbershop where, supervised by teacher, Bobby Matteson, they sharpen their skills on other Stateville inmates.

Candidates for barber school must have a GED, and score tens on their reading and math tests. They must also convince their teacher they're serious about a career.

"What I look for basically is why you really want to be in the program. Is it because you just want to get out of your cell, or is because you really want to better yourself?" Barber teacher, Bobby Matteson, said.

Stateville's had a barber school for 30 years or so, but it wasn't until last November that the rules were changed so that inmates who completed 1,500 hours of training would actually get a state barber's license.

"It at least gives them the viable skill that can be made available to them in terms of employment when they leave our facilities," Director of the Department of Corrections, Salvador Godinez, said.

"It's an opportunity to become a professional and produce some positive changes in who I am," inmate Anthony Thomas said.

Statewide, about 40 percent of all inmates are released within a year of their incarceration. Officials are now starting to reserve most of the spots in the class for inmates who are likely to be released soon, so they can make use of their license. But classes do include inmates like Albert Domagala,

Domagala is serving 40 years for murder, but the Illinois Supreme Court recently ordered another look at his conviction.

There are barber colleges in three other Illinois prisons, but Stateville is the only maximum security correctional center to have such a program